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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2568
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5013
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2768
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2633
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3257
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USTRANSCOM SCOTT AFB IL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 3427

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000403

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN OFFICIALS THREATEN TO END OVERFLIGHT
PERMISSION FOR ALL USG AIRCRAFT IF BILL NOT PAID

REF: A. ASHGABAT 0350

[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 0365

Classified By: Charge Richard Miles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Turkmen State Civil Aviation officials informed DAO on March 29 that, starting April 27, the Government of Turkmenistan will deny overflight permission for all USG aircraft, including those currently covered by blanket overflight, if an outstanding bill for overflight fees is not paid by that date (Ref A). State Civil Aviation officials warned that a diplomatic note officially informing the Embassy of this policy would arrive March 30 or 31. Previously, the Turkmen said they would only deny overflight for VIP aircraft and other flights not covered by the annual blanket overflight agreement. (NOTE: Turkey, Germany, the UK, and France also received bills for military flights transiting Turkmenistan air space at the same time as the Embassy did in January. Turkey paid right away. Recently the UK paid their USD one million bill. END NOTE.)

[1](#)2. (C) Charge raised this issue during a March 30 meeting with Foreign Minister Meredov. Meredov, who was unfamiliar with the details of the issue, promised to look into to it and then respond.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: This move adds to a number of problems dealing with refueling and overflights. We have not received a response to our diplomatic note requesting permission to bring in a fuel truck to resume refueling of USG aircraft by the Gas and Go operation. We had hoped to resume refueling on March 29. Charge raised this issue in his March 30 meeting with the Foreign Minister. Meanwhile, Turkmenistan authorities denied two requests over the weekend that had previously been approved -- flushing the fuel pit at the airport and a request to take photographs of connections to be used with the R-11 fuel trucks once Turkmenistan approves them being brought into the country.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: The issue of the overflight bill is threatening our blanket overflight and seriously hampers our ability to negotiate for an increase to the overflight cap (Ref B). While U.S. policy prohibits paying overflight fees, we should offer the Turkmen something - be it equipment or

something else - so as not to derail our overflight rights.
END COMMENT.
MILES